



bigmouth shiner

Notropis dorsalis

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Cypriniformes
Family:	Cyprinidae

Features

The bigmouth shiner has a distinctive body form – slender, relatively flat-bellied, and humpbacked. Adults reach three inches long. Its eyes appear to be looking upward when viewed from above. It has an olive-yellow stripe down the center of the back. The sides and belly are silvery. The horizontal mouth is on the bottom side of the head, overhung by the snout.

Natural History

The bigmouth shiner is one of the most widely distributed and abundant minnows in Iowa. It is common in most waters, but rare in the natural lakes. It is a bottom feeder, eating insects, detritus (bits of decaying plants and animals), and plant material. Bigmouth shiners are among the few fish that can be found above the sandy bottoms of small and medium-sized creeks. Spawning occurs May through July. It is important food for other fish and commonly used for bait.

Habitats

constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; natural lakes and prairie marshes; interior rivers and streams; Mississippi River; Missouri River

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.